

<b>Committee(s):</b> Natural Environment Board	<b>Dated:</b> 10/12/2024
<b>Subject:</b> Assistant Director Culture and Project's Update Report Q2: July-September 2024	<b>Public report</b>
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverse engaged communities</li> <li>• Leading sustainable environment</li> <li>• Vibrant thriving destination</li> <li>• Providing excellent services</li> <li>• Flourishing public spaces</li> </ul>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	N
<b>If so, how much?</b>	n/a
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	n/a
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	n/a
<b>Report of:</b>	Katie Stewart, Executive Director Environment
<b>Report author:</b> Simon Glynn, Natural Environment Division, Environment Department	

### Summary

This report provides an update against workstreams, outcomes and key performance indicators from the Natural Environment Division Business Plan and objectives from the Natural Environment Strategies that are applicable to staff in the Culture and Projects Section covering July-September 2025 (Q2).

The Culture and Projects Section comprises the Natural Environment Learning Team, Heritage and Museums Team and Carbon Removals Project Team.

### Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

### Main Report

## Background

1. The Assistant Director's update for Quarter 1 was presented to this Committee in October 2024.
2. This quarterly report format and content has been amended to align the reporting with the objectives of the Natural Environment Strategies and Business Plan currently being updated for the period 2025-2030. The revised reporting process is still being developed, and further refinements will be forthcoming.

## Current Position

3. This report provides a breakdown of activity in Appendix 1 with summary details and key points highlighted in the main report.
4. In the Natural Environment Division Business Plan for 2024/25, the priority workstreams for the Culture and Projects Section are:
  - Establish a natural capital-based management process across our open spaces (Carbon Removals Project)
  - Develop communities of interest that participate in, advocate for, and support our Natural Environment and Heritage charities
  - Develop a learning offer that builds nature connection and well-being
  - Protect and enhance our built heritage, landscape heritage and archaeological assets and promote them as part of our visitor and learning offers
5. The outcomes identified in the NE Business Plan relevant to the Culture and Projects Section are:
  - Delivery of the Climate Action Strategy will ensure the Corporation meets its target of being carbon neutral across our own operations (Scopes 1 and 2) by 2027.
  - Increased nature connection, pro-environmental behaviour and well-being of participants. More participants are from high pupil premium schools, are looked after children, young carers, young refugees and 13–25-year-olds who are struggling with education, employment or mental health.
  - Built heritage, landscape heritage and archaeological assets are protected, meet statutory obligations and are enhanced to support improved visitor and learning offer.
6. The performance measures associated with these outcomes and their reporting frequency are:
  - Achieve and protect annual carbon removal target of 16.2 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e
  - Number of participants per annum in our school learning and play programmes/ Annually
  - Number of heritage assets on the Heritage at Risk Register/Every 6 months
  - Number of visitors per annum to our managed heritage attractions/Every 6 months

7. Reporting on the relevant key performance indicators, therefore, will take place after Q2 and after Q4, once the data has been gathered and assessed.

## **Progress against Natural Environment Strategies and Business Plan objectives for the period July-September 2024 (Q2)**

### **Nature Conservation and Resilience**

8. In July, a successful hand-over of the Carbon Removals project was achieved and all project workstreams captured in updated project management documentation.
9. In September, the reversion of arable land to wildflower meadow at Copped Hall commenced with ground preparation and seed sowing. This work forms part of activities to increase carbon sequestration by 0.21kt and support biodiversity objectives.

### **Community Engagement**

10. Any activities in support of the Community Engagement Strategy largely relate to learning and heritage activities and are therefore referenced in section 4 of this report.

### **Access and Recreation**

11. Any activities in support of the Access and Recreation Strategy largely relate to learning and heritage activities and are therefore referenced in section 4 of this report.

### **Culture, Heritage and Learning**

12. The Learning Team have continued to facilitate nature and heritage learning at Epping Forest, providing school workshops at the Tudor Hunting Lodge and outdoor learning sessions at Barn Hoppitt.
13. The Learning Team also hosted sessions for young unaccompanied asylum seekers, working in partnership with the Corporation's Virtual School, and for young people from a pupil referral unit. The team have worked in partnership with Tindersticks (community interest company), to expand the programme for families and young people.
14. In July, the Learning Team partnered with Hackney Council to support their 10x 10 programme, which is a new initiative to support every child in Hackney to achieve 10 amazing activities by the time they are 10 years old.
15. Despite funding cuts in effect from April, the Learning Team was able to maintain its popular play offer at its two centres in Hampstead Heath during Q2, whilst undertaking an assessment of options to secure new income in support of maintaining the play offer in the longer-term.

16. In addition to delivering the ever-popular schools learning programme at Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest and West Ham Park, during Q2 the Learning Team expanded its learning provision for participants aged 3 - 11 with special educational needs and disabilities, funded through a grant from the Cultural and Creative Learning Fund.
17. In Q2, the Learning Team delivered bespoke learning sessions, including a tree-trail co-created with a local primary school and undertook photography with park users and a range of other activities in support of the weekend of celebration for West Ham Park's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 20-21 July.
18. At Keats House, between July and September 2024, a total of 12 sessions have been delivered to over 250 students from 12 different schools. Summer School 2024, on the theme of 'The Outer Limits' engaged a further 36 students from five schools, three of which were high pupil premium schools which had not visited Keats House in the current year. Keats House also took part in Open House Festival 2024, with 387 people visiting the house for free on Sunday 15 September.
19. The Heritage Team managed the reinstatement of the Highgate Roman Kiln and replica kiln into Highgate Wood, together with a temporary exhibition detailing the connection between the kiln and Highgate Wood. This work formed part of a successful Highgate Wood Community Heritage Day on 1 September, when the replica was fired for the first time. This was followed by a successful second firing of the kiln, led by local community group Turning Earth, as part of their open studio day event on 21 and 22 September.
20. In July, options for the repair of Wanstead Grotto and Landing Stage were considered by Epping Forest and Commons Committee. The approved option was to repair the Grotto to a condition sufficient to remove the asset from the Heritage at Risk Register. The number of heritage assets on the Heritage at Risk Register in Q2 is four, with a target of four by Q4.
21. During Q2, the Heritage team led the research, design and production of an outdoor exhibition on the history of West Ham Park, which was displayed at both Guildhall Yard and subsequently at West Ham Park to coincide with the weekend of celebration for its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 20-21 July.
22. The Heritage team on behalf of Keats House charity progressed a new 5-year licence with Keats Community Library to continue their library service from 10 Keats Grove.
23. The number of visitors per annum to our managed heritage attractions in Q2 is: Keats House 4,200 (comparable with 4,206 visitor numbers in Q2, 2023-24) and; The Monument 51,778 (a 12% decrease in numbers compared with Q2, 2023/24).
24. During Q2, Culture and Projects Section led the delivery of community engagement activities at West Ham Park, seeking feedback on the future of

the former nursery site. Activities delivered included young designers' workshops and an on-line survey.

## **Income Generation**

25. Income from admissions and group visits to Keats House by Q2 was £23k against a target of £52k for the year (this is a slight increase on the same period last year, when £22k was received). From April 2024, Keats House increased charges for its core learning offer to bring it in line with the Natural Environment Learning Team's charging structure. Income from admissions and sales at The Monument was £164k (a 25% decrease in income compared with Q2, 2023-24).
26. In Q2, an assessment of options to increase revenue to support the play offer at Hampstead Heath was completed (and reported to HHHWQP Committee in Q3).

## **People Management**

27. In July, both dedicated Carbon Removals Project roles were successfully recruited to, with the new members of staff receiving corporate inductions and visiting key sites and meeting with local site teams.
28. In July, The Learning and Heritage teams oversaw the successful recruitment of a project officer to deliver the 'Green Change-Makers' project at Keats House and the Adventure Clubhouse at Hampstead Heath.
29. In August, the Learning Team successfully recruited a new part-time Learning Officer to support the learning offer at Epping Forest.

## **Conclusion**

30. This revised Assistant Director report being presented is under development and will focus on reporting on the Business Plan and Natural Environment Department Management Strategies outcomes.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Progress against key objectives / actions (categorised by Natural Environment Strategy).

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